

## **SECTION I**

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### **HOMELESS AND SPECIAL POPULATIONS**

# **HOMELESS & SPECIAL POPULATIONS**

## **BACKGROUND**

**Demographics:** As indicated previously, Orange County has over 2.7 million residents and is the third most populous areas in California. It is also the fifth most populous area in the nation. According to the Orange County Register, "County's Population Is Heading Up Again" (March 18, 1998). In 1997 Orange County's population grew by 2%, twice the national average. The Center for Demographic Research at California State University Fullerton estimates the County's population will continue to grow to an estimated 2.86 million by the year 2000, and to over 3 million by the year 2020. Almost two-thirds of the County's population is between 20 and 64 years of age. The Table I-1 provides information regarding the present ethnic composition of the County's population:

**Table I-1**  
**Orange County Population by Ethnicity/Race**

ETHNICITY/ RACE	PERCENT OF COUNTY POPULATION
White (non Hispanic)	59.3
Black (non Hispanic)	1.8
Hispanic	26.8
Asian and Pacific Islander	11.5
Other	0.6

Source: County of Orange County Executive Office

Despite an expanding and diverse economy, the County experiences many of the ailments of a growing urban area, including a widening of the income gap between the rich and poor, a growing lack of affordable housing, and a homeless population with increasing housing and service needs. It is estimated that there are over 18,600 homeless in Orange County on any given night. This estimate is based on the 2000 Homeless Needs Assessment, which includes data collected from the region's homeless service providers and public assistance programs. While numerous programs are available to provide shelter and supportive services to the homeless, significant gaps exist in every component of the County's service delivery system.

## **Collaborations and Partnerships**

Due to the growing number of homeless in Orange County and the need for better coordination among County Agencies, non-profits, cities, and other groups, the Orange County Board of Supervisors established a Homeless Prevention and Related Programs Coordinator position within the County Executive Office (CEO).

A partnership was coordinated between the CEO, the Orange County Homeless Issues Task Force, and Shelter and Hunger Partnership (known as the Community Forum Collaborative) to conduct the Continuum of Care Community Forums. The Community Forums provide regional and coordinated planning meeting which focus on all issues relating to Orange County's Continuum of Care system. Issues include temporary shelter and affordable housing, health care, case management, transportation, other supportive services, legislation, funding and other related issues. The goal is to focus on the entire system of care through regular Community Forums and other meetings.

## CONTINUUM OF CARE COMMUNITY FORUM COLLABORATIVE



### ORANGE COUNTY HOMELESS ISSUES TASK FORCE



In an effort to strengthen and enhance the Continuum of Care Community Forum process, in February 1999 and October 1999 surveys of Assessment Group participants were conducted. The completed surveys provided a variety of viable alternatives that have been incorporated into the creation of the Year 2000 Assessment Groups.

The first change is that Assessment Groups will mirror the components of the Continuum of Care rather than focus on the different homeless populations. The Year 2000 Assessment Groups are: Advocacy; Prevention/Outreach and Assessment; Emergency Shelter; Transitional Shelter; and Permanent Affordable Housing. This is a reduction from 10 Assessment Groups in 1999 to 5 Assessment Groups in 2000.

The second change is that the Assessment Group process will be incorporated into task forces, collaboratives or advisory groups as opposed to separate community meetings. This change will effectively utilize the expertise and diversity of prominent coalitions and groups resulting in greater leveraging of community resources and participation. The Assessment Groups are smaller, sub-groups of the Community Forum who meet on a monthly basis and are designed to focus on the entire system of care. The purpose of each Assessment Group is as follows:

**Homeless Prevention/Outreach and Assessment Group:** This Assessment Group will focus on issues such as developing and expanding programs to prevent homelessness, crisis intervention, expansion of mobile outreach and assessment services, identifying and coordinating linkages in the system of care, and other appropriate issues.

**Transitional Shelter Assessment Group:** This Assessment Group will focus on issues such as shelter based support services, availability of transitional beds, development of additional transitional beds, intake and exit guidelines, processes for successful transition to permanent affordable housing and other appropriate issues.

**Permanent Affordable Housing Assessment Group:** This Assessment Group will focus on issues such as developing affordable housing, provision of supportive services in a permanent housing setting, NIMBYISM, and other issues you deem appropriate. The Permanent Affordable Housing Assessment Group will be key to removing barriers faced in the expansion of affordable housing opportunities to individuals and families earning less than \$10 per hour.

**Emergency Shelter Assessment Group:** This Assessment Group will focus on issues such as shelter based support services, availability of emergency beds, development of additional emergency beds, development of long term solutions to the Armory Shelter Program, and other appropriate issues.

**Advocacy Assessment Group:** This Assessment Group will focus on issues such as zoning, legislation, increase of shelter beds and services, shelter provider standards of care, increased funding, and other appropriate advocacy issues.

These changes in the Assessment Groups have produced positive results. Meeting attendance at the Community Forums averages between 175 – 250 representatives from non-profit organizations, cities, County Agencies, and a variety of other diverse groups. Through these coordinated efforts, numerous public-private partnerships and collaboratives have been, and continue to be, developed. This has enabled Orange County to expand its system of care and to ensure a year-round regional planning process to assist the homeless.

Examples of other ongoing homeless related issues coordinated by the CEO include:

- On-site outreach and services to large homeless encampments and the Santa Ana and Fullerton Armories
- Partner with the Census Bureau to ensure an accurate homeless count for Census 2000
- Advocate for additional funding for the Continuum of Care system (i.e., State Emergency Housing and Assistance Program funds (EHAP), Federal Emergency Food and Shelter Program funds (EFSP/FEMA), Proposition 10 funds, CalWORKs Incentive funds and other sources of private funds, etc.). Advocacy efforts include presentations to Commissions and planning groups and participation on local boards and project team collaboratives, etc.
- Partner with the Legacy Human Services Partnership to plan and develop homeless services and shelter at the former Marine Base at Tustin.

Orange County's current Continuum of Care system is comprised of a network of public, private, faith-based, for-profit, and non-profit service providers. County agencies such as the County Executive Office (CEO), Health Care Agency, Social Services Agency, Community Services Agency and the Housing and Community Development Department provide direct services for the homeless and/or significant resources for agencies serving the homeless. The region's municipalities also provide substantial resources for services that assist the homeless and those at risk of becoming homeless. When combined, these coordinated efforts decrease fragmentation and strengthens Orange County's Continuum of Care system for the Homeless.

## HOMELESS SUBPOPULATIONS

HUD has identified seven homeless sub-populations that require special consideration in the Continuum of Care system (**Table I-2**). However, it should be noted that common stereotypes the about homeless do not apply to the County's homeless population. For example, many Orange County residents are employed full-time, but cannot save the deposit for an apartment or afford high rents.

HUD defines being "threatened" with homelessness as a household below 80% of area median income with a housing cost burden exceeding 50% of gross income. Due to the booming economy and the increased demand for housing, thousands of individuals and families have been priced out of the Orange County housing market. The homeless in this category are known as the "working poor", or those households earning less than \$20,000 per year. With average rents exceeding \$1,000 per month, many individuals and families must choose between buying food and paying rent. The affordable housing crisis has led to an increased number of homeless in Orange County.

Within the network of service providers in the County, numerous programs specialize in services for not only the seven (7) sub-populations identified by HUD, but all of the County's homeless population. In the current Continuum of Care system, these agencies will continue to provide services tailored to the specific needs of special sub-populations. In light of the regional planning process implemented by Orange County for the 1998 and 1999 Continuum of Care Homeless Assistance Grant Application, the region's homeless service agencies came to realize the importance of providing up-to-date program information.

During the preparation of the 2000 Gaps Analysis, updated statistics were obtained on the homeless sub-populations identified by HUD as requiring special attention (**Table I-2**). This updated data has assisted the County in preparing a better analysis of the housing and service needs of the region's homeless, including those with special needs.

**TABLE I-2**  
**HOMELESS SUB-POPULATIONS IN ORANGE COUNTY**

Sub-Populations	Number
Chronic Substance Abuser	3,144
Seriously Mentally Ill	2,828
Dually-Diagnosed (both substance addiction and mental illness)	2,046
Veterans	1,786
Persons with HIV/AIDS	1,324
Victims of Domestic Violence	1,860
Homeless Youth (17-21)	2,797
<i>Note: Individuals may fit in more than one category.</i>	

Source: 2000 Continuum of Care Gap Analysis Chart - Final

The current Gaps Analysis for the County estimates there is 3,144 homeless **Chronic Substance Abusers** in Orange County's streets and shelters. An example of how this sub-population is reached is the County of Orange Health Care Agency's Substance Abuse Residential Treatment Program. This street oriented program identifies and serves homeless individuals in need of substance abuse and/or HIV/AIDS treatment. The goal of the program is to prevent the spread of infectious diseases, and to provide substance abuse treatment so clients may overcome their addiction. This program is funded with federal Housing Opportunities for Persons with AIDS (HOPWA) funds. Once program staff has reached and assessed clients, these individuals are provided services and the opportunity to enter the residential portion of the program.

Similarly, non-profit agencies (i.e., SPIN, Gerry House, and Salvation Army) operate substance abuse recovery programs. These agencies go into areas where the homeless congregate so that program staff can meet and assess substance abusers. These agencies also offer program referrals. In exchange for housing and support services, a client must enroll in a substance abuse recovery program. Once they have completed the program and demonstrated that they have maintained sobriety, they may be referred to a transitional housing program, and ultimately permanent housing programs.

It is estimated that there are 2,828 **Seriously Mentally Ill** among Orange County's homeless. As with homeless substance abusers, this sub-population often requires proactive outreach programs in order for clients to be assessed and served. The County's Health Care Agency has established programs that aim to identify assess and assist mentally ill homeless individuals. The Mental Health Association of Orange County also has developed the "Renew Outreach" program, which offers medical, vocational, benefits and housing placement services. These street programs also go to areas where the homeless congregate. Once contact is made, staff can assess the needs of an individual and arrange for appropriate services and housing. Drop-in centers also provide an opportunity to reach out to the mentally ill to facilitate their access to the system of care. Organizations like Helping Our Mentally Ill Experience Success (H.O.M.E.S.) provide a small portion of the much needed transitional and permanent housing opportunities for mentally ill homeless. These programs are reached via referrals.

**Dually-Diagnosed** homeless are individuals that suffer from both substance addiction and mental illness. It is estimated that 2,046 such individuals live on Orange County's streets or in homeless shelters. The Mental Health Association's "Renew Outreach" and the County Health Care Agency's treatment programs described above are examples of services that assist individuals suffering from mental illness and substance addiction. This sub-population is best reached with street service programs since this homeless population typically is unwilling or unable to access services on their own.

Orange County based non-profit agencies serving **Veterans** estimate that 1,786 homeless veterans (and family members) live in the region. Services available to reach out to veterans

includes the County's Veteran Services Department, which operates a referral source program for veterans and assists veterans to obtain benefits and/or resolve related issues. Veterans' benefits are often the only source of subsistence for many veterans and their families. The Veteran Services Department often is the first referral a homeless veteran is given when seeking assistance. In addition to this program, non-profit agencies such as Veterans Charities of Orange County (VCOC) and AMVETS provide outreach, assessment, support services and housing for homeless veterans. The National Coalition of Homeless Veterans estimates that 40% of homeless men nationwide are veterans, and 25% of homeless women are veterans. Based on a survey conducted by VCOC, 35% of Orange County's homeless veterans have some type of mental illness, 17% abuse alcohol, 25% abuse drugs, 23% have physical disabilities, and 57% are dually-diagnosed.

In a recent survey of service providers conducted by Info Link Orange County, nearly 100% of respondents indicated that they would (and do) serve homeless veterans. With the assistance of case managers, homeless veterans are often linked to benefits that are only available to them (e.g., medical and disability benefits). There remains a portion of the homeless veteran population, however, that will never apply or qualify for these veterans' benefits. For these individuals, the County's Continuum of Care system will continue to be the access point to services and housing resources.

It is estimated that 1,324 **HIV/AIDS** afflicted homeless individuals (and family members) live in Orange County. These individuals are reached through outreach programs offered by organizations such as the AIDS Services Foundation, HIV Planning Advisory Council, and service providers like Annie's House and Straight Talk Inc. The County's Health Care Agency also provides outreach, education and medical services to HIV/AIDS infected homeless. If available, emergency, transitional and hospice housing may be provided by HCA and local non-profits. Mercy House Transitional Living Centers and the City of Santa Ana are finalizing plans for the construction of Emmanuel House, a 24-bed AIDS care facility. This project has been funded with HOPWA funds and 1996 SHP funds, and will add much needed beds and service slots for AIDS patients. Programs are available for the homeless afflicted with HIV/AIDS directly through service providers or by referral.

It is difficult to estimate the number of **Victims of Domestic Violence** in the County since many cases go unreported. Recent law enforcement reports estimate that 57% of women who were physically abused by their partners do not discuss these incidents with anyone. Based on the number of victims the County's four primary domestic violence service agencies turn away and the recently conducted Homeless Needs Assessment, it is estimated that 1,860 homeless, battered spouses (558 for individuals and 1,302 for families) live in the County at any point in time.

The four primary non-profit service agencies in Orange County that serve victims of domestic violence are Human Options, Interval House, Laura's House, and Women's Transitional Living Center. These agencies have developed an extensive network of telephone hotlines, confidential referrals, and shelters. These networks have been created to provide a non-threatening means to reach victims of domestic violence - many of which are reluctant to discuss their abusive situation with anyone. The community's service providers (including local police departments) are also aware of these agencies and utilize them through the referral mechanism. Transitional housing for victims of domestic violence was one of Orange County's top priorities in both its 1998 and 1999 applications to HUD. HUD has committed substantial resources for these programs. While gaps in services/housing for this special need population still exist, the additional Continuum of Care Homeless Assistance funds should help expand the network of service currently provided by these agencies.

It is estimated that 2,797 **Homeless Youth** reside in Orange County. Reaching out and serving these homeless youth is undertaken by agencies such as Laurel House, Community Services Programs, Inc., Orangewood Foundation, Casa Youth Shelter, and Olive Crest. The region's schools also play a large role in preventing homelessness among youth, especially with programs that prevent school drop out. Through studies such as "1995-1996 Dropout Report" by the Orange Unified School District, the Office of Child Welfare and Attendance has found that high school dropouts earned an average salary of \$12,809, about \$6,000 less than

a high school graduate. The lack of education and/or vocation, coupled with a low earning potential, put high school dropouts high on the list of persons at risk of becoming homeless.

For those youth already homeless, programs such as Laurel House provide emergency shelter from two weeks to three months. Local police departments and service providers often provide referrals to these programs when they encounter a homeless youth on the street. Unfortunately, many of these youths are escaping an abusive home environment. Once they leave an emergency shelter they are faced with a choice of returning to the abusive home or the streets. Programs such as Orangewood and Olive Crest offer transitional housing opportunities where youths are counseled and provided with life skills to better prepare them for life as emancipated youth. While these transitional programs provide valuable services to youths, it has become evident through the community input process that better coordination is needed between public agencies charged with facilitating youth emancipation and non-profit agencies that serve homeless youths. This service gap has been identified in this year's priority needs.

In October 1999, the Future Search Network and the Social Services Agency hosted a 3-day conference on the growing needs of emancipated youth in Orange County. At this conference, many diverse stakeholders were brought together to map out an action plan to develop and expand programs to reduce the growing number of youth who become homeless once they age out of the foster care system.

In February 2000, the Grand Jury released a report on the growing needs of homeless emancipated youth in Orange County. This report detailed many of the same issues that were identified at the Future Search Emancipated Youth Conference. As a result of these two efforts, Orangewood Children's Foundation hosts regular planning meetings in an effort to move forward the implementation of the action plan and numerous organizations in Orange County are working collaboratively to reduce the growing number of homeless emancipated youth in Orange County.

In addition to the seven sub-populations identified by HUD for consideration, Orange County's Continuum of Care Steering Committee also assessed the needs of the disabled homeless and the current homeless/former homeless. It is estimated that 2,790 Physically Disabled homeless households reside in Orange County. Perhaps the best-known provider of services for the physically disabled homeless is the Dayle McIntosh Center for the Disabled. This agency operates an outreach program that goes into the community to identify, assess and assist physically disabled homeless persons. In addition to the Center's proactive outreach activities, governmental agencies and non-profits provide referrals to Dayle McIntosh. Other agencies that reach out to the physically disabled homeless include Veterans Charities of Orange County and the County of Orange Health Care Agency.

**Causes:** There are numerous factors that contribute to homelessness in Orange County. Difficulties in obtaining employment, limited education, mental illness and substance abuse, are but a few. Recent reports point to a local and national trend that is quickly becoming a significant contributing ingredient to homelessness – a growing lack of affordable housing. Participants cited fast-rising rents and inadequate federal rental subsidies as reasons why it is extremely difficult for residents to hold onto housing, and the robust job market as creating strong demand for housing, with new construction lagging behind, largely because land is scarce and expensive. As a result, prices for homes and rents were seen as rising at an alarming pace.

At an April 1999 town-hall meeting sponsored by UCI entitled "*Hard Choices: Housing and Community Through 2020*," a reoccurring theme prevailed - the lack of affordable housing is no longer just a social issue but a threat to Orange County's prospering business climate.

In October 1999, at a 3-day Future Search Conference entitled "*Where Will Working Families Live Earning Less Than \$10.00 Per Hour*" a reoccurring theme prevailed - the lack of affordable housing is no longer just a social issue, but a threat to Orange County's prospering business climate. As a result of this conference, the Future Search Affordable Housing Coalition was formed. This group works in partnership with the Kennedy Commission, another community group that focuses on the development of more permanent affordable housing in Orange County. Recognizing that the growing number of homeless in Orange County is directly linked

to the severe lack of affordable housing, these groups meet on a regular basis to implement action plans that were developed at the three day Future Search Conference.

The 1999 Orange County Community Indicators report states “Thirty-four percent (34%) of Orange County renters are unable to afford fair market rent on a one-bedroom apartment, while forty-two percent (42%) cannot afford rent on a two-bedroom apartment. Such households would have to work 105 hours a week, at minimum wage, to afford the average rent on a one-bedroom apartment. Orange County’s rental affordability situation is worse than the state average and most similar regions”.

The Community Indicators report also confirms that “in 1998-99 over 48,100 new jobs were created with only 10,901 building permits for housing being issued. The demand for housing in Orange County is more than twice the national average, with more than four new jobs created for every housing permit issued. Ranked 5<sup>th</sup> among metro areas in the U.S., Orange County trails only Los Angeles, New York, San Francisco and Bergen/Passaic, New Jersey. Most similar regions have much lower housing demand indexes”.

**Current System of Care:** Orange County’s current homeless system of care is comprised of a network of public, private, faith-based, for-profit, and non-profit service providers. County agencies such as the County Executive Office, Health Care, Social Services, Community Services, and Housing and Community Development provide direct services for the homeless and/or significant resources for agencies serving the homeless. The region’s municipalities also provide substantial resources for services that assist the homeless and those at risk of becoming homeless.

The County’s non-profit community is perhaps the most important player in the current Continuum of Care system. Hundreds of agencies throughout the County provide programs ranging from feeding the homeless on the street to creating permanent supportive housing opportunities. These services are available to homeless families with children and single men and women. The County’s non-profit community also serves special need populations, such as victims of domestic violence, veterans, the disabled and youth.

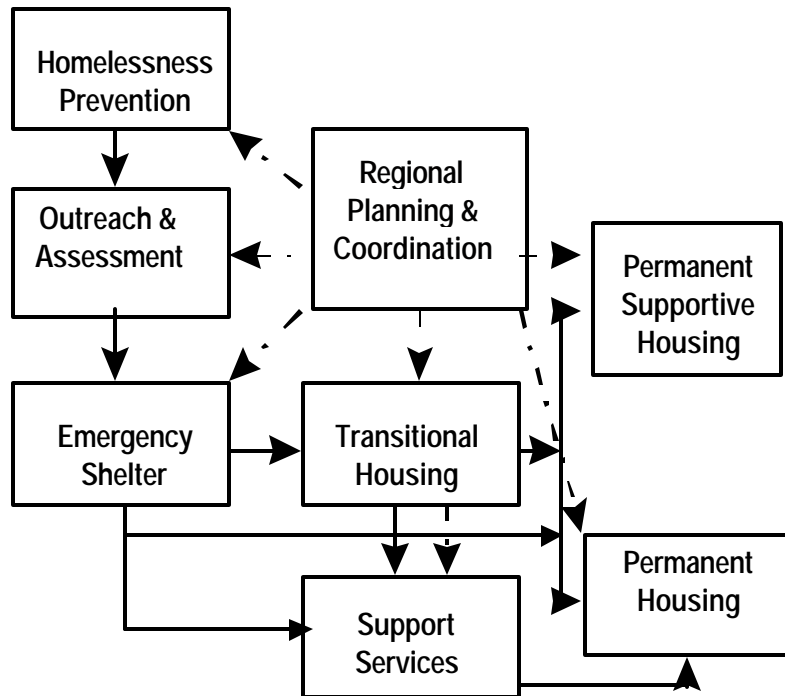
**ORANGE COUNTY CONTINUUM OF CARE LEADERSHIP CABINET:** In 1998 the Orange County Board of Supervisors approved the establishment of the Continuum of Care Leadership Cabinet. The mandate of the Leadership Cabinet is to provide direction to the Director of Housing and Community Development and to assist in the development and maintenance of the countywide comprehensive continuum of care planning process for the delivery of services to homeless men, women and children. The goal of the Leadership Cabinet is to coordinate the involvement of three primary groups: private industry, homeless experts, and the public sector in the continuum of care planning process.

The Leadership Cabinet is also responsible for working with H&CD staff to design the planning process for each year’s Supportive Housing Program homeless competition and to provide direction on the organization of the application review and evaluation processes.

**Figure I-1** provides an overview of the County’s current Continuum of Care system by component. A key element of each component is assessment. Each service provider provides an assessment of prospective clients as part of their intake process. It is the responsibility of the case manager to thoroughly assess a client’s need and make appropriate referrals for support services and housing needs.



**Figure I-1:  
Current Orange County Continuum of Care System**



**Homelessness Prevention** – Homelessness prevention is a critical component of the region's Continuum of Care system. Several public assistance and entitlement programs are available to qualified individuals and families that provide some level of resources to sustain self-sufficiency. These programs include social security, general relief, CalWORKs, and Section 8 rental assistance.

Orange County's Continuum of Care system includes programs to provide emergency assistance such as food, medical care, transportation, or one-time rent or utility payments, preventive measures to stabilize households to prevent them from slipping into homelessness. Several programs exist Countywide that provides homelessness prevention services. Share Our Selves, Salvation Army, Catholic Charities, and Episcopal Service Alliance are some of the agencies that provide assistance, such as food, money for prescriptions, bus passes, etc., to help in an emergency situation. Other programs such as FISH's *Rent to Prevent* program provide one time rent and/or utility payments to prevent eviction or utility shut-off. Families Forward's *Reach* program provides classes in money management and consumer awareness aimed at providing households the skills and tools to prevent financial crises that may result in homelessness. Countless faith-based, community and private groups also provide food, clothing, financial assistance and other forms of support to prevent homelessness.

In addition, through the Workforce Investment Act (WIA), Orange County's seven One-Stop Centers provide workforce development services to assist under-employed or unemployed homeless individuals and families. The One-Stop Centers provide job training, placement and retention services. With higher wages, homeless individuals and families are afforded the ability to access and sustain permanent housing and thus end homelessness.

**Outreach and Assessment** – Several means exist to reach out to the homeless, assess their needs, and provide appropriate services or referrals. Several non-profit and governmental agencies work in the streets and shelters to identify the homeless with special needs, and assist them with access to appropriate services and/or housing. The County's Health Care Agency (HCA) operates an outreach program for substance abusers, the mentally

ill, and persons afflicted with HIV/AIDS. Many non-profit agencies, such as Serving People In Need (SPIN), Orange County Mental Health Association, and the Orange County Rescue Mission, also serve the homeless in the County's streets and parks. At these locations, program staff is able to reach out to the homeless, assess their needs, and provide them with

information and resources. Additionally, the County's drop-in centers provide center staff the opportunity to conduct outreach and assessment of the homeless. These centers include the Mental Health Association's Garden Grove Clubhouse and "Place on Sycamore" Homeless Multi-Service Center near Santa Ana's Civic Center.

In recent years, several regional coalitions and collaboratives have formed in Orange County. These coalitions/collaboratives have been successful in identifying the needs of at-risk families and individuals, and linking them to public and private resources that helps sustain self-sufficiency. Several of these collaboratives have providers of homeless services as partners (e.g., Families Costa Mesa and Families First Collaborative). Coalitions and collaboratives have proven to be an efficient and effective means to provide outreach to the homeless community by utilizing cross-referrals, advocacy and community centers, which in the past would not be available to homeless service providers or overlooked as a possible point of outreach.

**Emergency Shelter** – Several emergency housing facilities are available in Orange County for homeless families, single adults, youth, the disabled, victims of domestic violence, veterans, and other special homeless population groups. According to a recent Info Link survey, it is estimated that 816 emergency shelter beds are available in the region (509 for individuals and 307 for families). In addition to emergency shelter, the homeless are provided with valuable support services that aim to keep them off the street and prepare them for appropriate transitional housing. Orange Coast Interfaith Shelter, Orange County Rescue Mission, and Shelter for the Homeless are a few of the agencies providing emergency shelter and services for Orange County's homeless. The Interfaith Shelter Network, operated by the Orange County Homeless Issues Task Force, also provides emergency shelter and services through 54 churches throughout the County. Cities such as Santa Ana also provide emergency housing via a hotel voucher programs.

An additional element of the County's emergency shelter component is the winter weather programs. The cities of Laguna Beach and San Clemente operate such programs in the winter during periods of inclement weather. These programs provide 75 emergency beds. Additionally, the County of Orange sponsors the Emergency Shelter Armory Shelter Program. Since 1987, two local State National Guard Armories have been opened during severe winter weather conditions providing 250 shelter beds per night.

During the 1999-2000 winter program, the CEO's Office coordinated a public/private partnership that involved a variety of agencies that provided on-site services at the two National Guard Armories. Through this effort, homeless individuals and families were provided much needed mental health, legal, medical, case management, and other much needed services during the cold winter season.

The Cold Weather Armory program was operational from December 1, 1999 to the end of March 2000. During this period, 25,000 shelter bed nights were provided to an unduplicated 1,100 homeless individuals and families. Agencies involved in this effort include, but are not limited to: Health Care Agency, Housing and Community Development Department, Orange County Sheriff's Department, Mental Health Association, Public Law Center, Orange County Rescue Mission, Shelter & Hunger Partnership of Orange County, Shelter for the Homeless, and numerous other agencies.

The Armory Program was never intended to be a permanent solution to provide emergency shelter for the homeless. In an effort to develop long-term solutions to the armory program, in October 1999, the CEO's Office developed a strategic plan for the emergency shelter program. This plan provides a multi-year funding plan for the armory program for a 3-year period. The CEO's Office is continuing in its efforts to work with organizations, such as the Emergency Shelter Expansion Task Force, to develop additional year-round emergency shelters in Orange County.

**Transitional Housing** – Transitional housing is limited to a stay of no more than 24 months. As with emergency shelters, support services are also provided to program participants. It is estimated that 1,558 transitional housing beds are currently available to Orange County's homeless (626 for individuals and 932 for families). With free or reduced cost shelter, an individual can focus on the causes of his/her homelessness, and work to overcome the causes. Substance abuse, domestic violence, and lack of employment skills, are just a few of the causes that can be addressed and overcome while residing in a transitional housing program.

Transitional housing is a crucial step to achieving self-sufficiency. Many transitional programs require residents to save a portion of their wages earned while living in the shelter program to facilitate their move into permanent housing. Mercy House Transitional Living Centers, Anaheim Interfaith Shelter, Fullerton Interfaith Shelter, Orange Coast Interfaith Shelter, HIS House, House of Hope, Families Forward, and Veterans Charities Transitional Housing are a few of the agencies currently providing transitional housing and services in Orange County. Several additional transitional housing projects are in various stages of planning throughout the County. For example 400 new transitional housing beds are planned for development at the recently closed Marine Corps Air Facility – Tustin. Military operations ceased in July 1999. Temporary access is allowed so rehabilitation of transitional housing may commence. It is anticipated that some of these units may become operational by the end of 2001.

In the late 1999, the Orange County Rescue Mission received the first set of keys to the housing units at the former military base. The Rescue Mission will develop 192 units of emergency and transitional housing for homeless individuals and families. In addition, 50 additional transitional housing units for families will be developed once the City of Tustin receives the final conveyances from the Department of Defense.

These 50 family units will be divided among the following four nonprofit agencies: Families Forward, Salvation Army, Human Options and Orange Coast Interfaith Shelter. These four nonprofits, along with the Orange County Rescue Mission are known as the Legacy Human Services Partnership. This Partnership is currently working with the CEO's Office in the planning and development of shelter and services that will be available for the homeless at the former Tustin Marine Base.

**Permanent Supportive and Permanent Affordable Housing** – Due to physical and mental limitation, some homeless individuals will need sustained services and special housing on a long-term basis. The 2000 Homeless Needs Assessment has identified 33,630 permanent supportive and/or affordable housing units available to the system of care. Permanent affordable housing is defined as housing that is available to low-income persons at an affordable rent (e.g., Section 8 rental assistance or other forms of subsidies). Not all these units are currently used as permanent supportive housing, which is defined as housing available for two or more years, blended with appropriate services. There are some "permanent support housing" units in the current inventory. Examples include:

- Hagen House, a 24-unit AIDS hospice program that provides shelter, medical care, and counseling for persons afflicted with AIDS.
- Helping Our Mentally Ill Experience Success (H.O.M.E.S.) in Newport Beach, offers permanent supportive housing for mentally ill adults.
- Dayle MacIntosh Center for the Disabled Mariposa Villa in Irvine, which provides permanent supportive housing for disabled homeless individuals.

The lack of affordable housing poses a major obstacle to many homeless individuals as they prepare to leave transitional housing programs. (Orange County's growing lack of affordable housing was discussed at the beginning of this narrative.) Programs such as SPIN's Guaranteed Apartment Payment Program (GAPP) are one response to this dilemma. GAPP provides households graduating from a transitional housing program with financial support for the first month's rent and security deposits in order for them to access safe, decent, and affordable housing. Orange County's *Affordable Housing Strategy* identified GAPP as a model program that could be replicated to assist the homeless access permanent housing. Section 8 rental assistance is an additional resource to assist the homeless access permanent housing. Over 21,195 households in Orange County receive Section 8 assistance provided by the four

Housing Authorities in Orange County. The County also has Shelter Plus Care resources (funded in 1996 and 1998) that provide 96 Section 8 vouchers for disabled homeless. Redevelopment agencies, HOME Participating Jurisdictions, and cities also utilize their resources to develop new, long-term affordable housing that is accessible to the homeless and former homeless.

In 1998, a unique component of the County's homeless population was highlighted throughout the region – Motel Families. In an effort to address the special needs of this non-HUD defined sub-population, the County's Social Services Agency was directed by the Board of Supervisors to undertake a study of the living condition of motel families. Depending on a household's situation, this type of housing may be temporary, transitional, or permanent. This County study concluded that motel families are a "subset" of the County's homeless population. While they do not have access to any special programs, they do have access to programs or services available to any other homeless sub-population in the County.

The "Motel Families Report," prepared by Orange County Social Services Agency in October 1998 concluded that this type of housing offers a relatively affordable housing alternative (rents range from \$120 - \$180 per week), however, this type of housing is fraught with problems. Units are often too small for a family (typically one room with one bathroom), do not offer any privacy, and may be unsafe/unsanitary (bathroom often doubles as a kitchen, and prostitution/drug activities in these motels is not uncommon). This type of housing is not considered as a component of the region's system of care, however, it is appropriate to recognize its place within the system and as a new access point to other components of the system of care. Further outreach efforts are planned for this segment of the homeless population in order to successfully move them through the system of care (i.e., Orange County Child Abuse Prevention Center, a community-based organization, has set up an on-site service center at a motel where these families reside. This organization is currently providing job skills training, parenting skills and life skills training to these homeless families. The Orange County Child Abuse Prevention Center plans to expand these services to other motels to assist additional homeless families).

Since the issuance of the motel families report the Social Services Agency, the homeless families trapped in the motel circuit continue to face new challenges as Orange County cities pass and/or enforce time limits on motels being used as affordable housing and/or temporary shelter. The CEO's Office is currently working with the Anaheim Motel Collaborative to provide on site outreach to the hundreds of families impacted by these time limits. The Collaborative has identified the lack of affordable housing as one of the biggest factors contributing to this growing problem in Orange County.

**Supportive Services** – Scores of agencies provide thousands of support service slots for the region's homeless. In a recent survey conducted by Info Link Orange County, 150 entities were identified that provide some type of support service for the homeless. These agencies include non-profit, faith-based, community, and governmental entities. These agencies are a key component to the region's Continuum of Care system as they provide assessment, referral, and in some cases, housing services. Support services provided include, but are not limited to:

- Case Management – comprehensive assessment of clients, preparation of a strategic plan for self-sufficiency, follow-up services
- Food – free soup kitchens, food banks, and sack meals
- Clothing – free clothes, clothes closets for work attire, and clothes laundering facilities
- Health Care – free medical and dental clinics, mental health screenings, and medication
- Counseling – financial planning, family counseling, and legal counseling to obtain public benefits
- Employment Assistance – employment training, job placement, and resume/interview skills development
- Substance Abuse Recovery Treatment – substance addiction treatment, recovery home rental assistance, and counseling

**Service Coordination** – Coordination of homeless services has traditionally been fragmented in Orange County. As indicated earlier, a number of groups continue to meet to discuss homeless issues on a regional basis in an effort to coordinate services. The Homeless Issues Task Force has played a significant role in regional coordination for over a decade. Other sub-regional groups have come together in the central, coastal and southern areas of the County for the same purpose. Additionally, cities have designated staff as contact/lead individuals for homeless program coordination. These regional groups and City staff have been critical in the development of the County's Gaps Analysis and establishing priority projects.

As previously mentioned, the County of Orange has created a position of Homeless Coordinator within the County Executive Office. This position, the Continuum of Care Leadership Cabinet, and Housing and Community Development recognize the importance of accessing and coordinating County and regional resources. Regional planning and coordination will help identify service/housing gaps, priority needs, and help ensure the efficient utilization of precious limited resources.

**Table I-3** provides examples of the service agencies operating in the County's current Continuum of Care system by component.

**Table I-3**  
**Sample Programs of Current Continuum of Care by Component**

Prevention	Outreach	Emergency Shelter	Transitional Housing	Permanent Supportive Housing	Support Services	Service Coordination
Families Forward: REACH	O.C. Mental Health Assoc.: Renew Outreach	Salvation Army	Anaheim Interfaith Shelter	Hagen House: AIDS Hospice	The Salvation Army	O.C. Continuum of Care Community Forum
Share Our Selves: Emergency Assistance	Dayle McIntosh: Disabled Homeless Outreach	CSP Emergency Youth Shelter	Human Options/ Second Step	HOMES: mentally ill	Someone Cares Soup Kitchen	O.C. Homeless Issues Task Force
FISH: Rent to Prevent		Orange Coast Interfaith Shelter	Veterans Charities Trans. Housing Program	Mariposa Villa: disabled Permanent Housing	Buena Park Coordinating Council	Info Link O.C.
Consumer Credit Counselors	Veterans Charities of Orange County	O.C. Rescue Mission	Women's Trans. Living Center	Affordable housing units Countywide assisted w/ federal, state, local and/or private funds	Catholic Worker	Shelter and Hunger Partnership
Fullerton Interfaith Emergency Services	O.C. Health Care Agency: AIDS & Mentally Ill Outreach Programs	Armory Shelter Program	Regina House		So. Cal. Indian Center	Orange County CEO/Homeless Coordinator
Saddleback Community Outreach		Shelter for the Homeless	Families Forward		Southwest Comm. Center	Shelter Providers Forum
		Human Options	His House		Mary's Kitchen	Kennedy Commission
		Laura's House	House of Hope			
		Friendship Shelter	Gerry House			

Source: Info Link Orange County

## HOMELESS NEEDS AND PRIORITIES

The needs of the homeless population of Orange County fall into two categories: shelter and support. The Homeless and Special Needs Population table (**HUD Table 1-A**) specifies the various subsets within these two divisions and indicates the sub-groups among the homeless population. There are housing needs or “gaps” at each of the various levels of homelessness services: prevention, outreach and assessment, emergency shelter, transitional housing, support services, and permanent supportive affordable housing.

**Beds/Units:** Permanent supportive affordable housing is targeted as the highest priority in the 2000 Continuum of Care Homeless Needs Assessment. Permanent supportive affordable housing is intended for those homeless people such as the mentally ill or persons afflicted with AIDS who will continue to need assistance even after transitioning from homelessness. Due to physical and/or mental limitation, these individuals will need sustained services and special housing on a long-term basis. The estimated need of 43,448 beds/units (including individuals and families) is currently met by only 33,630 beds/units. The gap is 9,818 beds/units. Transitional Shelter is cited as a mid-level priority with needs for 9,302 beds/units met by existing 1,558 beds/shelter with a difference of 7,744 beds/units. Transitional Shelter is limited to a stay of no more than 24 months. As with emergency shelters, support services are also provided to program participants. With free or reduced cost shelter, an individual can focus on the causes of his/her homelessness, and work to overcome the causes. Substance abuse, domestic violence, and lack of employment skills, are just a few of the causes that can be addressed and overcome while residing in this type of housing program.

**Supportive Service Slots:** Although many agencies provide support service slots for the region’s homeless, the unmet need is great. Targeted as high priority in the 2000 Continuum of Care are substance abuse treatment, mental health care, housing placement, child care, and support for the physically disabilities.

**Sub-Populations:** Orange County’s homeless population is comprised of individuals who may fit into one or many of the sub-population groups indicated on The Homeless and Special Needs Population table (**HUD Table 1-A**).

**HUD Table 1-A**  
**Homeless and Special Needs Population**

	Targeted Needs/Subgroups	Estimated Need	Current Inventory	Unmet Need/Gap	Relative Priority
<b>INDIVIDUALS</b>					
<b>Beds/Units</b>	Emergency Shelter	2,791	509	2,282	Low
	Transitional Shelter	2,791	626	2,165	Medium
	Perm Support Housing <sup>1</sup>	13,034	3,392	9,642	<b>High</b>
	<b>Total</b>	<b>18,616</b>	<b>4,527</b>	<b>14,089</b>	
<b>Supportive Service Slots</b>	Job Training	4,186	1,135	3,051	Low
	Case Management	5,581	1,135	4,446	Medium
	Substance Abuse Treatment	2,791	380	2,411	<b>High</b>
	Mental Health Care	2,791	150	2,641	<b>High</b>
	Housing Placement	5,581	1,135	4,446	<b>High</b>
	Life Skills Training	5,581	1,135	4,446	Medium
	Physical Disabilities	837	568	270	<b>High</b>
<b>Sub-Populations</b>	Chronic Substance Abuser	1,842	720	1,122	<b>High</b>
	Seriously Mentally Ill	2,177	150	2027	<b>High</b>
	Dually-Diagnosed	1,395	75	1,320	<b>High</b>
	Veterans	1,395	568	828	Medium
	Persons with HIV/AIDS	662	400	262	Medium
	Victims/Domestic Violence	558	275	283	Medium
	Youth (17-21)	2,797	275	2,522	<b>High</b>
<b>PERSONS IN FAMILIES WITH CHILDREN</b>					
<b>Beds/Units</b>	Emergency Shelter	6,511	307	6,204	Low
	Transitional Shelter	6,511	932	5,579	Medium
	Perm Support Housing <sup>1</sup>	30,414	30,238	176	<b>High</b>
	<b>Total</b>	<b>43,436</b>	<b>3,1477</b>	<b>11,959</b>	
<b>Supportive Service Slots</b>	Job Training	3,256	1,239	2,017	Low
	Case Management	13,022	1,239	11,783	Medium
	Child Care	10,171	12,615	-2,444	<b>High</b>
	Substance Abuse Treatment	3,256	1,281	1,975	<b>High</b>
	Mental Health Care	3,256	1,239	2,017	<b>High</b>
	Housing Placement	13,022	1,239	11,783	<b>High</b>
	Life Skills Training	13,022	1,239	11,783	Medium
	Physically Disabled	1,953	620	1,334	<b>High</b>
<b>Sub-Populations</b>	Chronic Substance Abusers	1,302	46	1,256	Medium
	Seriously Mentally Ill	651	0	651	<b>High</b>
	Dually-Diagnosed	651	0	651	<b>High</b>
	Veterans	391	620	-229	Low
	Persons with HIV/AIDS	662	550	112	Medium
	Victims/Domestic Violence	1,302	290	1,012	Medium

<sup>1</sup>Figure includes permanent affordable housing units  
Above information based on year 2000 Homeless Needs Assessment

Based on the needs identified on the previous **HUD Table 1-A**, the following unmet needs have been identified for homeless individuals and persons in families with children:

- Permanent supportive housing
- Substance abuse treatment for homeless individuals and persons in families with children
- Mental health care for homeless individuals and persons in families with children
- Housing placement services for homeless individuals and persons in families with children
- Programs for homeless individuals, and persons in families with children, who are physically disabled
- Programs for homeless individuals that are chronic substance abusers.
- Programs for homeless individuals (and persons in families with children) who are seriously mentally ill
- Programs for homeless individuals (and persons in families with children) who are dually-diagnosed
- Programs for homeless youth (17-21)

### **Orange County's Strategy and Vision to Combat Homelessness**

The projection of homeless in Orange County through 2004 is expected to increase over the currently estimated 18,600. The Continuum of Care Community Forum Collaborative believes the best approach for alleviating homelessness in Orange County is through a community-based process that provides a comprehensive response to the different needs of homeless individuals and families. With the Continuum of Care Leadership Cabinet providing oversight, the County's Continuum of Care system strives to develop and maintain a comprehensive plan that incorporates the following core elements:

- Sufficient advocacy to focus on issues related to zoning, legislation, funding, affordable housing, shelter development, and other issues that support and strengthen the system of care.
- Homeless Prevention Programs that promote workforce development and that provide emergency eviction prevention and utility assistance to prevent homelessness
- Sufficient outreach and assessment to identify an individual's or family's needs and connect them to appropriate facilities and services.
- Emergency shelter facilities and programs that serve as a safe and decent alternative to living on the streets.
- Transitional housing programs that demonstrate strong outcomes with appropriate supportive services.
- Availability, retention, and development of permanent and supportive housing opportunities as the last step toward self-sufficiency and the Continuum of Care system.
- Identification of new resources to assist the homeless and to close gaps in the County's system of care.



## **Specific Goals and Action Steps to Combat Homelessness**

The following goals and action steps were developed for Orange County's 1999 Continuum of Care system:

### **GOALS**

- Secure 1999 Continuum of Care Homeless Assistance grant funds from the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD).
- Identify and coordinate additional resources to address gaps in the region's Continuum of Care system that are not eligible for Continuum of Care grant funding.
- Ensure that project sponsors implement activities within required time frames.
- Provide a minimum of 69 units and 22 beds of permanent supportive housing for homeless persons leaving transitional housing programs, especially those with special needs.
- Create a minimum of 420 new transitional housing beds Countywide.
- Ensure a minimum of 7,400 service slots are created Countywide to benefit homeless populations identified as a priority need.
- Ensure the community-based method devised to create the Continuum of Care system is sustained beyond the application process.

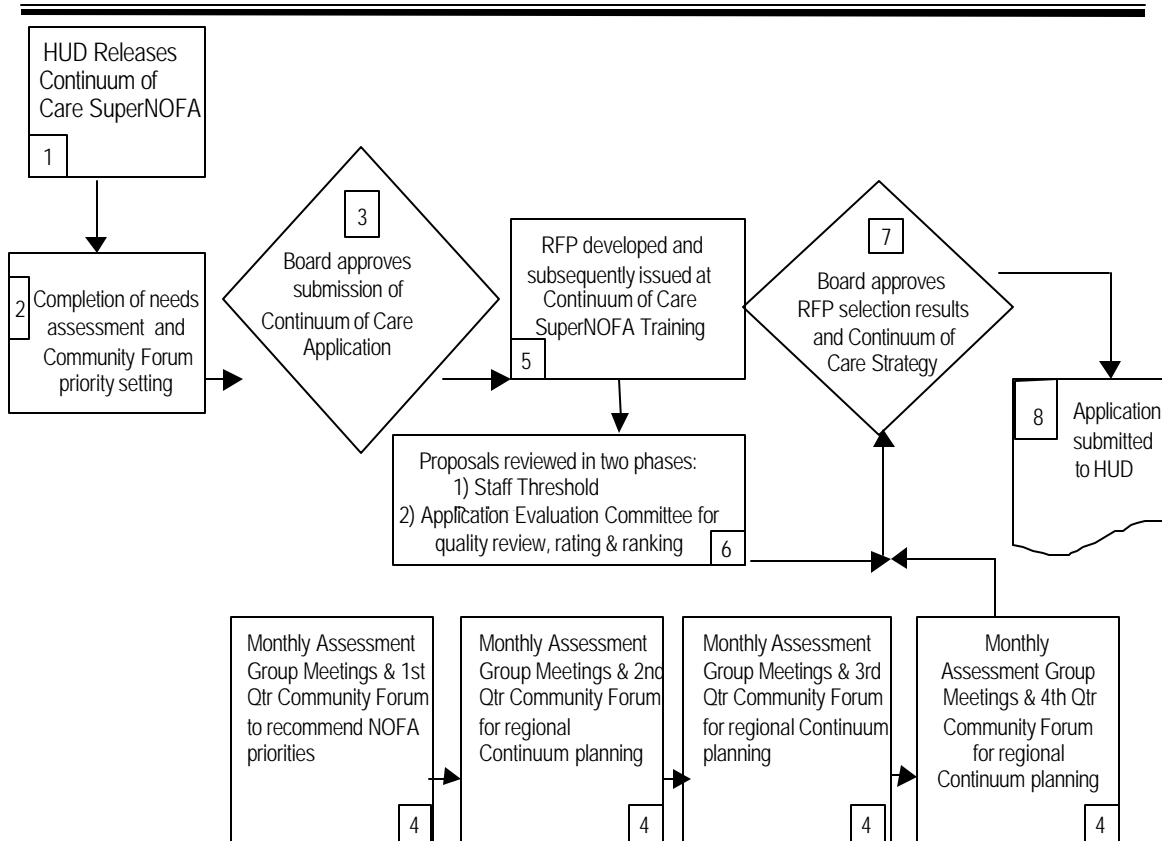
### **ACTION STEPS**

- Prepare and submit a quality 2000 Continuum of Care Homeless Assistance Funds application to HUD, which meets all HUD elements, and meets County review threshold requirements.
- Once funded, provide technical assistance and ensure that grant resources are distributed to project sponsors in a timely manner thus ensuring the region's homeless will benefit from federal grant funds as soon as possible.
- Build partnerships with social service agencies to better serve the needs of emancipated youth leaving public or private programs.
- Build partnerships with the medical community to better serve the needs of homeless persons afflicted with substance abuse, mental illness, or both. Also build the capacity of existing programs that serve homeless persons afflicted with substance abuse and/or who are mentally ill.
- Coordinate collection of mainstream resources from other County departments, cities, etc. and work with cities to focus resources towards gaps in the Continuum of Care system.
- Implement program monitoring and technical assistance to ensure application goals are implemented by project sponsors.
- Continue quarterly meetings of the Community Forum and monthly meetings of the Assessment Groups.

The County of Orange is currently in the process of preparing the 2000 Continuum of Care Homeless Assistance for submittal to HUD. Once completed, goals and actions steps for 2000 will be developed and implemented.

## Orange County's Continuum of Care Application Process

Figure I -2



The Orange County Continuum of Care Application process is illustrated in Figure I-2 above. As indicated, once HUD releases the Continuum of Care SuperNOFA, needs are assessed and priorities are determined from the input provided at the Community Forum. The County Board of Supervisors (Board) then considers approval for submission of the Continuum of Care Application. A request for proposals is subsequently prepared for issuance to interested nonprofit organizations for the competitive process.

After the proposals are reviewed through a staff threshold eligibility process, they are evaluated by the Application Evaluation Committee for application quality, rating and ranking. Once this has been completed, applications selected are considered by the Board for approval and subsequently submitted to HUD. During this entire process, monthly Assessment Groups and quarterly Community Forum meetings are conducted to recommend NOFA priorities and regional Continuum planning.

**Table I-4**  
**Homeless and Special Needs Population**  
**Projections 2000-2004**

	Targeted Needs/ Subgroups	2000 Need	2004 Projected Need
<b><u>Individuals</u></b>			
<b>Beds/Units</b>	Emergency Shelter	2,791	3,783
	Transitional Shelter	2,791	3,783
	Perm Support Housing <sup>1</sup>	13,034	17,667
	<b>Total</b>	<b>18,616</b>	<b>25,233</b>
<b>Supportive Service Slots</b>	Job Training	4,186	5,674
	Case Management	5,581	7,565
	Substance Abuse Treatment	2,791	3,783
	Mental Health Care	2,791	3,783
	Housing Placement	5,581	7,565
	Life Skills Training	5,581	7,565
	Physical Disabilities	837	1,135
<b>Sub- Populations</b>	Chronic Substance Abuser	1,842	2,497
	Seriously Mentally Ill	2,177	2,951
	Dually-Diagnosed	1,395	1,891
	Veterans	1,395	1,891
	Persons with HIV/AIDS	662	897
	Victims/Domestic Violence	558	756
	Youth	2,797	3,791
<b><u>Persons in Families With Children</u></b>			
<b>Beds/Units</b>	Emergency Shelter	6,511	8,825
	Transitional Shelter	6,511	8,825
	Perm Support Housing <sup>1</sup>	30,414	41,225
	<b>Total</b>	<b>43,436</b>	<b>58,876</b>
<b>Supportive Service Slots</b>	Job Training	3,256	4,413
	Case Management	13,022	17,651
	Child Care	10,171	13,786
	Substance Abuse Treatment	3,256	4,413
	Mental Health Care	3,256	4,413
	Housing Placement	13,022	17,651
	Life Skills Training	13,022	17,651
	Physically Disabled	1,953	2,647
<b>Sub- Populations</b>	Chronic Substance Abusers	1,302	1,765
	Seriously Mentally Ill	651	882
	Dually-Diagnosed	651	882
	Veterans	391	530
	Persons with HIV/AIDS	662	897
	Victims/Domestic Violence	1,302	1,765

<sup>1</sup>Figure includes permanent affordable housing units

**Table I-4** shows the projected needs, for both homeless individuals and families with children through the year 2004.